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ABSTRACT

This paper outlines the history of Czech higher education, changes after the 1989 "Velvet Revolution," and possible future directions as the society as a whole adjusts to non-Soviet, democratic government. An early section describes the early development of higher education beginning with the founding of Charles University in 1348. The following section discusses Austrian-German influences on Czechoslovakia's education system which resulted in modeling the Czech university system of German universities. The next section describes the 40 years of Communist rule and attempts to remold education in the image of Soviet education. This section discusses access, curriculum, resource allocation, planning, staffing, and students. The next section covers the same topics in the period since 1989 and the experience of freedom, limited resources, and unlimited demand. A final discussion of the change since 1989 and future directions for higher education in the Czech Republic notes that legislation in 1990 gave a great deal of authority to institutions and their faculties. Some now feel that the legislation may have gone too far in delegating responsibilities. Although the system has undergone change, universities are also finding that faculties and other elements are resistant to change. (Contains 40 references.) (JB)

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UNIVERSITIES IN TRANSITION IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC: THE CASE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH BOHEMIA

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To understand the changes in the Czech universities, a review of the historical context of higher education in the Czech Republic is necessary. For those living outside of The Czech Republic, it is difficult to fully understand the current situation in higher education. The purpose of this section is to outline the antecedents and change in the Czech higher education system, and to describe the historical context of the Czech higher education system, changes after 1989, and an analysis of possible future changes. The traditions of European higher education, reaching back a millennium, provide legacies that are important factors in the present restructuring of Czechoslovak higher education.

Early Development of Higher Education

In 1348 Charles the IV, Holy Roman Emperor and King of Bohemia, established what was to become Charles University, the first university east of the Rhine and north of the Alps. Following upon the founding of the universities at Salerno, Bologna, Paris and Oxford, the university began as an independent body of students and professors, organized into faculties, under the leadership of an elected rector. It followed in its structure and organization the ancient university models of its predecessors (Haskins, 1957). Prague became the site of the first of the great Central-European universities: Charles University 1348, Vienna 1384, Heidelberg 1385.[1]

After Charles IV established the university at Prague, other important schools were established. Emperor Maximilian II established the University of Olomouc in 1566, originally as a Jesuit academy and then, in 1573, as a university. The first mining academy in Europe was established in 1763, located in Banska Stiavnica, and in 1787 a school for engineers was established in Prague which evolved into a polytechnic, and divided into Czech and German parts in 1868. A German technical university was founded in Brno in 1849, and a Czech counterpart followed in 1899.

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Early developments led to differences between the Czechs and Slovaks. Czech Bohemia and Moravia eventually united under the crown of St. Wenceslaus, while from the 10th century until the end of WWI Slovakia was dominated by the Hungarian state which itself came under Austria in 1526. The absolute monarchy in Hungary forced the Hungarization of Slovakia, much harsher than the Germanization of the Czech lands. As a result, before 1918 there was not a single Slovak higher education institution in Slovakia. Even after the early sixteenth century, when the Habsburgs effected a personal union of the kingdoms of Bohemia and Hungary, the political and cultural development of the Czechs and Slovaks were separate (Daniel, 1992). Thus the division of the Czechs and Slovaks in 1993 rests on centuries of separation.

The Czechoslovak State was founded on October 28, 1918, as a result of the Treaty of Versailles following the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. By 1936, Czechoslovakia had 13 higher education institutions with 52 faculties, over 23,000 students and more than 3450 professors, docents and teaching staff (Hrabinska 1991).

Tomas Masaryk, the founding father and first president of Czechoslovakia, in 1918 tried to reduce the role of the Catholic Church and of German culture and economic power. He was an early leader in the development of a distinctly Czech language, literature, culture and identity.

Comenius University was established in 1918 as a Slovak university and quickly became a premier education facility. The Nazi occupation devastated Czech higher education. After November 17, 1939 the Nazis closed all higher education institutions within the territory of the Nazi Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. The institutions remained closed until 1945, after which universities slowly reopened. In Slovakia, institutions remained open and grew during this period, e.g., the Nazis permitted the formation of The Slovak Technical University and the Bratislava School of Economics (Harach et al, 1991). Two strong influences on current Czech higher education have been the Austrian-German and the Soviet higher education.

Austrian-German influences[2]

The Austrian-German university tradition forms the first part of the background of Czechoslovakia's educational system. The tradition linked the university to the national political structure. This legacy promoted the ideal of Lehrfreiheit and Lernfreiheit (freedom to teach and freedom to learn) but these freedoms always depended upon the State, which founded universities and established the legal structure within which they would operate. Professors were civil servants, drawing their salaries and privileges from the state and accepting its control. They protected their vision of the ivory tower by pledging loyalty to the State (Van de Graaff 1978). Thus by the dawn of the 20th century the universities were used to being dependent on the state, however benign that dependence might be.

The other important legacy of Austro-German educational and cultural dominance, with regard to higher education, was the modern concept of the university. The University of Berlin in the nineteenth century viewed the unity of research and teaching as the mission of the university. Humboldt and others led the university to an increased reliance on empirical research and increasing specialization. This tradition led to new criteria for faculty evaluation and student performance (Kerr 1972; Van de Graaff 1978). Higher education in The Czech lands developed under these principles, common in the German speaking part of Europe. Universities were seen as scientific and educational institutions where students, in agreement with Humboldt tradition, became members of the academic community, built upon the creative work of professors. Teaching and investigation were a part of the research process, based on high levels of independent scientific learning (Harach et al 1991).

By the end of the nineteenth century, institutions throughout the world were emulating German universities. Lord Ashby called the German university model "the nineteenth century idea of a university." The model influenced the development of modern universities in Japan, the United States, and much of Eastern and Central Europe. German became the language of scholarship, scientists emulated German scientific and teaching methods and degrees, and German laboratories became the world standard (Ashby, 1967).

Thus when Czechoslovakia was founded in 1918, it had a university system similar to that model found in Austria and Germany. Before WWI Czechoslovakia was economically strong compared with other nations. It had an advanced industry, educated and skilled work force and cultural traditions, and a higher education system that ranked among the most advanced in the world (Harach et al 1991).

The Soviet Period: 1948-1989.

The Communist Party spent forty years attempting to remold Czechoslovak higher education in the image and likeness of the Soviet Union and the principles of international communism. The Party not only controlled all levels of higher education, it also used institutions as instruments for controlling and reeducating student minds to create the "new communist man" (Koucky, 1990). The government, under party direction, rigidly centralized and politicized higher education in terms of access, curriculum, staffing, students, resource allocation and planning.

Access. Access to higher education was tightly controlled, and became an open instrument of political pressure on citizens. Political criteria included party membership by the parents or the applicant. Other political considerations were applied to new applicants, such as proclaimed loyalty to the new communist state, and non-religious beliefs. The government used the children of the regime's critics and opponents as hostages, denying qualified applicants access because of their parents political beliefs.

The entrance procedures evolved into an extensive system of corruption, interventions, and protectionism. In addition ministries set the number of students who could be enrolled according to five year plans' projections of the demand for graduates. Thus students were often forced to study in areas of little or no interest if they wished to gain access to higher education. (Harach et al 1991).

Curriculum. All teaching and scientific activities were based on the so-called scientific world outlook of Marxism-Leninism, Communist Party policy and methodology for all sciences. Compulsory Marxism-Leninism classes made up a substantial part of the curriculum (Harach et al 1991).

The Communist Party controlled the social sciences to ensure that the curriculum was consistent with Party dogma. Party membership was often a condition for getting a teaching job. Most of the curricular offerings suffered from a lack of up to date content, an elimination of content that did not fit party dogma, a lack of contact with science and professionalism in more advance countries, and an outdated technology.

In the process, pedagogical faculties lost status, if indeed that was possible, by being the most subjected to subversion and monitoring. Because they trained teachers, and thus were seen as instruments of political indoctrination, teacher training institutes and their curricula were the most heavily politicized and controlled. Politically correct, but otherwise inadequate persons, were given jobs and at times leadership positions in the institutes. Teacher training was modelled on the Soviet system. Similar decline took place in the social sciences which were subverted as tool of the communist party and subordinated to party interest (CHES 1992; Harach et al 1991).

Another effect of the communist period that affected curriculum, as well as staffing and resource allocation, was the establishment of the academies of science, with generous funding, the latest in equipment, and a direct control by the party at the highest levels, bypassing the ministry bureaucracies. The Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences emerged as the primary organ for establishing and administering research programs throughout the country. The existence of these expensive and ideologically burdened academies, patterned after the Soviets, resulted in the separation of the higher education system from the academies, teaching from research, and advanced students in science from research facilities, precisely in opposition to the earlier Humboldtian tradition. University teachers, overburdened with students, ideological control, and bureaucratic inertia, began to lose pace with scientific research in their field, and levels of expertise declined (CHES 1992; Harach et al 1991).

Resource allocation and planning. Each successive five year plan was designed to provide the planned state economy with personnel to meet the needs of the state. State planning directed university plans for student enrolment and discipline-specific decisions. Conforming to the planned system was the paramount means for evaluating the effectiveness of each institution and resource allocations (Koucky 1990).

The evaluation of institutions before 1989 was subordinated to the constitutionally based ideological and political doctrine of the communist party, which held that the Communist Party would set objectives and principal goals in the field of education. Education was evaluated by inspection The aim was to control at all levels of management the implementation of policy, the contents, methods and results of educational work. As Harach et al (1991) point out, the form of inspection was not respected. In a centrally planned economy there were no objective criteria which could be applied to higher education and the quality of its results; there was no comparison with the world. Any objective assessment of the work of teachers and administrators was impossible because their evaluation and appointment were exclusively the domain of the Communist Party.

The communist state created few new universities during its forty years. Despite their troubled past, the universities have carried on teaching and have retained some traditional independent academic values. This perseverance has enabled the universities to maintain some degree of freedom of thought and independent scholarship.

Despite decades of repression and control, universities have remained an important part of Czechoslovak society. They have retained a certain respected status despite outside invasions, the near destruction of the system in WWII, and the Communist state's use of them as instruments for controlling and reeducating student minds to create the "new communist man," and to provide the planned state economy with personnel to meet the needs of the State (Koucky 1990).

Staffing. Professors who wanted to continue teaching after the advent of Communism were under pressure to slant their teaching to Marxist-Leninist dogma. Anyone not showing public support for the regime was under constant threat of dismissal (Bollag 1992, May 13). There was always the possibility of informers in classes or among colleagues, and they could report on the presence of correct thinking.

Purges of universities took place periodically, resulting in the expulsion of professors and students, the abolition of faculties, and long prison terms or exile. Early on independent teacher and student associations were abolished, academic senates abolished, and elected academic officials replaced with political appointments. New compulsory organizations were established, directly subordinated to the Communist leadership. Successive purges came as early as 1948, and continued through the "normalization" period (Harach et al 1991).

Faculty were regularly spied upon, and many attempts were made to recruit faculty as informers. In any case it was impossible to decline an invitation for "discussions" from the state security police, and some faculty, fearful for their lives, families, jobs, and imprisonment, cooperated with police to provide initially innocuous information, then were trapped into a deeper a web of informing on colleagues. An

education ministry official estimated that 10% of the university instructors were blackmailed, bribed, or persuaded to spy on their colleagues (Bollag 1992 May 13).

An illustration of how powerful were the incentives to cooperate: shortly after the dissidents founded the Charter 77 movement, academics were forced to take part in an humiliating display of loyalty. Without being shown the human rights document, they were asked to sign a party-sponsored condemnation of it. At Charles University, the premier institution, only three of 500 faculty refused. It was a choice between signing and leaving (Bollag 1992, May 13).

Open defiance, or dissidence could result in loss of job, assignment to menial tasks, imprisonment, and the denial of university admission to sons and daughters. In fact many hundreds of university teachers did lose their jobs after the Soviet tanks crushed the Prague Spring of 1968. This was the period of "normalization", as the government called it. A better description would be the repression or elimination of those who supported Prague Spring's movement toward a more open society.

The "normalization" following the suppression from the Prague Spring caused many leading scholars and researchers to exchange their teaching positions for menial jobs or to choose emigration. The higher education system was poorly developed because the central government controlled institutions which were unable to exercise academic prerogative within their schools; membership in the Party was a distinct criterion for the highest academic posts (Cerych 1990, Koucky 1990). This administrative structure created a decrease in Czechoslovakia's international recognition and the reputation and position of higher education in research and science.

Students. Students suffered, as their work became more ideologically burdened, more divorced from research, more isolated and sterile, and constantly more distant from advances in other countries. The OECD report (Harach et al 1991) cites as an example language teaching, which was devastated, becoming mostly theoretical with little or no real communication. Study trips were very limited and subject to strict political selection.

In addition, the higher education system was highly militarized. Military departments were introduced and male students were trained as reserve officers. Training took almost 20% of their time in the two year program; in addition a short term in the army was obligatory.

The proportion of students in the age cohort 20-24 was among the lowest in Europe. There were too few places for students. The proportion of full time student as a percentage of the 20-24 age cohort fluctuated since 1960, but it has been falling since 1980, when it was 17.5%. Since 1986 there has been a gradual increase in the number of students enrolled, but this has failed to increase the proportion of the age cohort enrolled.

Since 1989. Along with the new freedom came new problems. As the system struggles toward a new future, with limited resources and apparently unlimited demands, some directions emerge.

Access. Access is now based on the results of secondary school course of study and written and oral exams given by universities, which now have control over admission standards, as well over curriculum and the number of places that will be open each year in each department and faculty. Students may apply to several universities, but each application takes a fee. So now students may choose their course of study and university, but at a price. They still may have to study in an area of their second or third choice if their first choice, e.g. medicine is too competitive for them to gain access.

The proportion of full time student as a percentage of the 20-24 age cohort has fluctuated since 1960, but it has been falling since 1980, when it was 17.5%. It was 13.9% in 1992. Since 1986 there has been a gradual increase in the number of students enrolled, but this has failed to increase the proportion of the age cohort enrolled. The situation is likely to get worse in the near term because of the rapidly increasing size of the age cohort and the apparently inelastic supply of places in higher education.

The supply problem is due mainly to the lack of resources to greatly expand higher education and the rigidity of teaching methods and learning styles. i.e. the great amount of time spent in lectures, labs, classes by students and teachers, the lack of independent learning styles based on the full use of library resources, computers and scientific data bases, interactive TV, video discs, and other technology (CHES 1993).

Curriculum. Curriculum has been changed in a number of ways. One is the introduction of a three year bachelor's degree, mostly to prepare students for the job market. New courses of study have been introduced. An example of both innovations is offer by the faculty of public health at the University of South Bohemia. Their students receive bachelor's degrees qualifying them to care for handicapped children and adults, and to work in geriatrics as well (CHES 1993b).

New institutions have been created and old ones re-structured, but role of the academy of sciences, and whether their integration with universities will be completed, is still a guess. Most research is still done outside of higher education, and there are problems with re-establishing research at the universities, e.g. loss of power, status, and financial and other resources by the powerful academies. While the government is closing institutes and reducing budgets, the two systems remain virtually self-sufficient. There are some moves toward integration, for example the funding of competitive research grant proposals which could be submitted by universities or institutes (Bollag 1993, March 17; CHES 1993a).

Evaluation of institutions, teachers, curricula and courses of study are in a beginning stage. In practice evaluation seems to be the responsibility of the new accreditation commissions created by the 1990 law, but these have concentrated on the accreditation of the new regional universities, e.g. South Bohemia (Hendrichova 1992).

The division of universities into separate and powerful faculties (schools), each with its own academic senate, has led to a fragmentation and, in the absence of a powerful rectorate or ministry, a strengthening of the power and independence of deans and faculties.

The 1990 law mentions for the first time a short form of university study culminating in the Baccalaureate. Normally it lasts three years and it is used for career education. For example, in the University of South Bohemia, the agriculture faculty initiated a new three year program in quality control of agricultural products, and another in travel services. In the biological faculty there are new baccalaureate programs in ecology and preparatory courses in biology; in the pedagogy faculty there are new three year programs in physical education, computer technology and school management; and in the faculty of Theology two new three year courses were started, pastoral care assistants and christian education workers.

The law introduced the preparation of doctoral study at the new universities. There is still, however, a great need to innovate in terms of content and methods of instruction, and in improving quality. The instructional process needs more independent learning, and expand use of technology via computer and video (CHES 1993).

Resource allocation. Many feel that extreme decentralization, alluded to above, left no one in charge of planning, no higher authority able to allocate resources to national needs. This may change with the new draft of a possible legal change. There seems to be no plan to improve access of students to higher education, or to deal with the very high, and expensive, student-teacher ratio (8-1), or the extraordinary number of hours (at least 25 a week) teachers and must spend sitting in lectures (Hendrichova 1992).

Institutions are still depend on scarce state funds for their survival, and there is an absence of tradition of financing higher education from many sources, public as well as private. A small beginning of change is apparent, mostly in the way institutions garner funds form wherever they can, and use these funds for needed expenditures not affordable through the regular budget process, e.g. computers and software, international travel, conferences and workshops, travel and entertainment, and the purchase of capital equipment. The financial contributions of students is being discussed in the draft of the new law, but the figure mentioned, Kcs. 200, is modest indeed.

The state remains responsible for the basic budget of the institutions, now more than five billion Kcs. annually. The amount has gradually risen but the proportion of gross domestic product it represents has remained steady in the 1990's, at about .6%. The

state has made it clear that it will keep a tight reign on the national budget, so universities are free, even encouraged, to pursue other sources of income, e.g. foreign or domestic grants, earnings from economic activities, sales of goods or services, payments for post graduate studies.

In the future it will be necessary to strengthen the economic self sufficiency of the university. Funds from the government are not likely to grow as they have in the recent past. Already the parliament is considering a change to a tuition-charge system. Thus higher education must increasingly focus on raising its own funds.

Staffing. With regard to faculty in higher education, several things happened nationally. The Czechs went to greater lengths than most to remove from positions of authority those who contributed to the political persecutions of the Communist era. Legislation created a screening process which bars former Communist Party officials and police informers from management posts in the universities, including rectors, vice-rectors, deans, vice deans, and elected members of academic senates.

The screening process set up by the legislation, as it applies to administrators in higher education, requires that institutions submit names of administrators to the Ministry of Interior; files will be checked, and the submitting institution will be told whether the person named was or was not an informer. The process does not apply to faculty members.

Since 1989, a small number of academics have been forced out of their universities by the new academic administrators and by pressure from students. These few are among the most vicious collaborators with the former Communist government. Many other past collaborators left quietly, often on a retirement pension, in order to avoid confrontations (Bollag 1992, May 13).

In another move, commissions were established to reinstate faculty who were fired for political reasons by the Communists, a difficult process because many of these were fired more than two decades ago, and were unable to keep up to date in their academic disciplines, and lost the knowledge, skill, energy, and confidence that would enable them to return to their jobs. Nevertheless, many did return, and this has added several problems: more salary pressure on scarce resources, made an aging faculty even older, and in some cases lowered the quality of instruction. Despite the problems, however, there is widespread agreement that it is right and just to offer to re-employ the teachers in question (CHES 1994; Bollag 1993, November 3).

Salaries have kept pace with inflation, and may have exceeded it a bit, but they start from a very low base, in many cases $200 a month. Although such figures are misleading in terms of comparing living conditions, one can still see that the amount is not competitive. The most able faculty, in the high demand areas, can leave for other employment or leave the country, and too many do.

Students. Present day students were formed by the Communist education system. They are all too young to have known anything else, and were prohibited by censorship from contact (books, TV, film) with the West. Older family members and older teachers were often unable or unwilling to inform them of life on the outside, for to do so in a positive way would be quite dangerous. So it is interesting to read what literature exists on student behavior in higher education.

One view we have of them--they were incredibly brave, taking leading roles in 1939 against the Nazis, in 1948 against the Communist move to control universities, in the 1968 nonviolent civil defense of their country against Russian tanks, and in the velvet revolution of 1989.

After 1989 a survey of student attitudes (Cermakova & Holda 1991) found that after the 1989 revolution, students returned to their normal way of life, which had included a visible passivity toward civic or political matters. The saw, at least in 1991, very little change in their studies as a result of the 1989 revolution. In terms of their views on political and economic matters, they may be characterized by watching and awaiting to see what happens. Many of their views appeared to be confusing and contradictory, perhaps as a result of their low interest in participating in the civic and cultural affairs of the country. There was evidence however that most students feared the impact of radical economic reform.

In terms of their views of the situation in universities, there was a prevailing dissatisfaction with the present situation, yet a recognition that they lacked the interest or inclination to work to change things. They criticize the educational process and level of teaching and course content, the lack of study materials, yet admit that their own study efforts and discipline is low. Few students showed any knowledge of or interest in the work of the academic senates or other governance bodies or governance processes of the university.

Interestingly, about half of the students agreed with the idea that they should pay a part of the study costs, but only if the institutions were willing to raise quality. Only 1/5 of the students believed that university education should be free, but 65% felt that loans would be appropriate, for they viewed their education as an investment in the future. Some students felt that the introduction of loans and tuition would result in more study effort. Most (75%) felt that the amount of student payment should be related to ability to pay and to the cost of subjects studied.

Summary. The literature on changes since 1989 in higher education in general make clear that the system has undergone remarkable change in a short time. Today institutions decide or actively participate in many decisions totally reserved to the government before, e.g., access, structure, governance, curricula, and academic appointments. New legislation in 1990 gave institutions great power over internal decisions, and set up mechanisms of self-governance such as academic boards and

senates. Among the many positive aspects of the legislation was that it gave universities and their faculties unprecedented authority to formulate the conditions under which they will function, and that has been a very positive learning experience (Hendrichova 1992).

After several years of living with the new freedom, scholars, administrators, and some government officials feel that the 1990 act went too far in delegating responsibilities to institutions, a natural reaction to the years of repression. For example the senates in some institutions are heavily weighted to student participation, and rectors and deans are not regular members of the academic senates of their institutions and have no vote. A situation of responsibility without authority or power to act began to develop. Reformers in Czech republic have been frustrated by the almost unlimited power of faculties within universities to select new courses, open new departments, and hire new instructors. Rectors have no power to force faculties to avoid wasteful duplication by offering joint courses. In one university for example, both pedagogy and medical faculty opened their own nursing schools since 1990, despite the opposition of both the Rector and the academic senate.

The division of universities into quite separate and powerful faculties (schools), each with its own academic senate, has led to a fragmentation In addition many felt that the extreme decentralization left no one in charge of planning, no higher authority able to allocate resources to national needs. The positive change to greater institutional autonomy has led to mixed consequences, depending upon what groups in the institution have grabbed the increased autonomy. However, Czech reformers are heartened by the possibility in the drafts of a 1994-95 law that may make university the only legal entity to hire and fire, make it easier for departments to dismiss incompetent instructors, also new amendments may make it possible to charge tuition.

Among the new personnel, many of those who want change hark back to the elitist education of the 1930's, and fail to understand the changes that have gone on in higher education internationally over the past 50 years. Thus, in a country where less than 15% of the cohort group 20-24 gain access to higher education, there seems to be no overall plan to raise the percentage and stop the wastage. No one seems able to deal with the very high, and expensive, student-teacher ratio (8-1), or the extraordinary number of hours (at least 25 a week) teachers and students must spend sitting in lectures (CHES 1993; Hendrichova 1992).

Student comments and responses indicated a general agreement with the market economy concept, but have anxieties about the demands the market will make on them, including the rigors of competition in the labor market which they will soon enter. They insist on the right to work and the right to a social security net to protect them if the economy gets too bad.

Indeed, since 1990 students have begun to contribute more. First a fee was assessed on the admissions application. Then the system of student maintenance stipends was abolished in 1992. Also students now pay more for their meals and dorm rooms than they did. Up to 1990 both were highly subsidized, but the stat allocations for these expenses were cut, and the cost to students thereby increased, although not to market rates. Similarly health care, which had been free, now requires some contribution from the student (CHES 1993).

There has been a recent shift in the courses of study students take. It is not clear whether this represents a shift in demand, a shift in supply of new courses of study, for example, or a changes in the way things are counted. But if one compares 1988 with 1992, by category of studies, the category of humanities, theology, social sciences and law have increased; also the category of math and science; also medicine and pharmacy. Decreases have occurred in the following categories: agriculture, forestry and veterinary medicine; education; engineering (CHES 1993).

Although the system has undergone change, universities are finding that their faculties and other aspects of the institutions are very resistant to change. There is considerable inertia and one must consider the conservative of the faculty who were after all trained by communists. The teaching staffs have not basically changed in composition since communist times. The great mass of the professors need time to change attitudes. Perhaps among all the faculties, the social scientists have made the most change in overhauling their curricula and redefining their fields. Reform efforts are also being undermined by low pay. Many young and talented academics are finding more rewarding careers outside of the university.

Burton Bollag (1993, November 3) in an article on change in universities in Eastern Europe found that despite the fact that it was common for academics of dubious competence to be hired on the basis of party allegiance, very few academics have lost their jobs. That could have been done in 1990, but not now. The 20-30 % of the worst old professors could have been sent away with honor, but not now. Bollag, using Hungary as an example, made the point about higher education in the whole area. Mediocrity of the teaching corps is the common denominator of post-communist higher education. Universities have been given almost complete autonomy and the likelihood that they will reform themselves is now low.

1.Charles University was founded under the authority of the "Golden Bulls," a document written in Latin and with the attached golden seal (bull) of Charles IV. The document specified that doctors (i.e., faculty) should have the same rights as faculty in Paris and Bologna and that the university was intended for the Czech Kingdom and to be located in Prague. Wenceslaus IV, "the King of Rome and the King of the Czechs" (the son of Charles IV) issued the "Decree of Kulna Hora" (Kulnahorsky decree) in which he established that the Czechs would have three votes and the remaining nationalities one vote. He referred to analogies with Paris, Lombardy and Italy. Until the middle of the

18th century Latin was the language of the University. In the 18th century, the enlightenment and the growing domination of the absolutist Habsburg monarchy resulted in the Germanization of the University, with German the language of scholarship. However, prolonged agitation and effort to use Czech as the major language resulted in 1882 in the division of Charles University into a German and Czech part. In 1918 T.G. Masaryk made Czech the language of the University (Harach et al 1991).

2. The land which is now Czech Republic was settled by Slavs and German-speaking peoples since the earliest times described by written records. During much of this time German speaking peoples dominated the culture, the university, trade, and constituted an educational, social, and economic elite. German replaced Latin as the language of instruction in the 18th century university, it was the language of the western Austro-Hungarian Empire, and of the Habsburgs, and it flowered with the growth of German literature and music, and indeed all the arts. In all of this, the word German refers to a cultural and linguistic entity, not a political one. Indeed the modern German state did not exist during most of this period, although the Czech lands were fought over and often ruled by the Germanic super powers of Central Europe. What is now the Czech Republic had for centuries, up to the expulsion of two to three million Germans after WWII, a substantial population of persons who were culturally, ethnically, and linguistically German, not citizens of modern Germany (Borsody 1980; Gawdiak 1989; Daniel 1992).

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